

Crossing the party lines

By Stephen Koss

DAVID BUTLER (Editor):
Coalitions in British Politics
128pp. Macmillan. £7.95 (paperback £3.95).

A two-party mentality, which is the underlying presumption of a two-party political system, may long have outlived its relevance and, perhaps more arguably, its usefulness. As early as 1882, it was expressed more clearly in W. S. Gilbert's immortal lyric than in either parliamentary divisions or electoral responses. Although preceding politicians cannot be expected to acknowledge as much, especially to themselves, party lines have become increasingly blurred and crossed. Consequently, David Butler reminds us, during the past seventy-seven years, "Britain has spent twenty-four, almost one third of the time, under coalition or minority governments", and he anticipates that "it is likely to spend even more time under such rule in the future". For those who variously start under the constraints of the present Labour-Liberal pact, which survives on borrowed time, it is not a comforting prospect.

Yet the essays which Dr Butler has assembled in *Coalitions in British Politics*, including his own stimulating assessment of political developments since the Second World War, lend force and substance to his argument. Most valuably, if chiefly by implication, they put the predicament of Messrs Callaghan and Steel in historical perspective. The narrative, which is ably sustained throughout the book by a series of tentative observations in the inter-party "understanding" (some would consider it a misunderstanding) of 1977 that "illustrates a continuity in British politics" precisely because it so resoundingly echoes problems raised by the crises of each of the preceding periods" under investigation.

It was Disraeli, winding up his budget speech in 1852, during "an abnormally timed thunderstorm" to which Gladstone contributed flashes of oratorical lightning, who professed "that England does not love Coalitions". As Robert Blake, who

vividly re-creates the scene, remarks with scant exaggeration, those "words... have echoed down the years and have become a part of British political folklore". Nevertheless, neither the validity of the assertion nor the intentions of the speaker admit of an easy interpretation. "The greatest of all evils is a weak government. They cannot carry good measures, they are forced to carry bad ones." Disraeli had declaimed in *Coningsby*, a source no less instructive than his public pronouncements as a guide to his historical perceptions. Was the Aberdeen Coalition that supplanted the Derby ministry, in which Disraeli had served without distinction, the last of its kind? Or, intrinsically weaker than its single-party predecessor? J. B. Conacher, on whose monumental work, *The Aberdeen Coalition 1852-1855*, 1968, Lord Blake has "drawn heavily", has shown otherwise.

When an overall majority fails to accrue to any one party, what is the alternative to coalition? Is "weak government" to be averted? Or, from another angle, is "coalition" necessarily synonymous with "weak government"? Political leaders, combining motives of party loyalty, opportunism, and opportunism—who can say to what proportions?—have been compelled to grapple with the problem. In some instances, and with varying degrees of success, formal alliances were concluded: long enough to engage George III and to provide Disraeli with his apparent frame of reference, but later attempts proved both more durable and more constructive. The Liberal Unionists, after burning their Gladstonian bridges, joined forces with Lord Salisbury and eventually merged with their Conservative allies: Kenneth O. Morgan sees the process as complete by 1903, in fact if not in name; but Lord Blake points out that Liberal Unionists were deemed eligible for membership in the Carlton Club only in 1911, and it was then that Austen Chamberlain first "set foot in that Conservative holy of holies". Asquith exchanged his Liberal administration for a wartime coalition in May 1915, and Lloyd George displaced him in December of the following year, when he created a second coalition that survived until 1922. Cooperation thereafter between the Liberal and Labour parties was

fitful, and only occurred when mutual interests dictated. It culminated in the early months of 1931, when MacDonald and Lloyd George, an old friend at the gates, entered into a "quasi-coalition", as David Marguard piquantly calls it. "Coalitions are detestable, are dishonourable," MacDonald told the House of Commons in his first speech as Prime Minister in 1924. Yet, for reasons which Mr Marguard explains with sympathy and insight, MacDonald accepted it as his "duty" to form a National Government to contend with the collapse of international finance in August 1931. He expected his tenure at the helm to last "about five weeks, to tide over the crisis", but found himself unable "to draw a line between this time of crisis and a normal condition which is to follow". Just as Dr Morgan convincingly demonstrates that the postwar Lloyd George coalition was "a device of expediency", not a "device of principle", Mr Marguard pleads the case that, even after 1932, "MacDonald was more than the helpless figurehead which he has sometimes been depicted as being".

MacDonald, followed successively by Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain, continued to posture as leaders of a "National" government long after the initial purpose of the enterprise had been betrayed and any pretence to non-party or trust-party character was impossible. The government, which Winston Churchill formed on May 10, 1940, was more than a coalition. It was the only genuine National Government in British history. So A. J. P. Taylor begins his essay with a characteristically categorical flourish that immediately signals (in the unlikely event that reassurance is required) that the master has not lost his touch. "Chamberlain's system of government" hardly worthy of the "National" label it arrogated to itself, is swiftly brushed aside.

Broadly, exclusion of Churchill was one of the few questions on which the Liberal and Conservative and their supporters were united. Neville Chamberlain relented supreme despite much criticism and many failures. He was in no need of a National Government. He believed he had one already. Those who supported him composed the National Government. Each point is adopted, except for the one that goes astray in a typographical jumble on page 76. Mr Taylor is at his pungent best when he compares Churchill's wartime attitudes, procedures, and political commitments with those of Lloyd George, Asquith, and less obviously, Lloyd George and MacDonald, had contrived to

appoint as many of their followers as possible to pivotal places in the coalitions they respectively formed; often, they were able to dispense patronage that was disproportionate to the parliamentary support at their command. By contrast, "Churchill was curiously isolated from the political world despite his devotion to Parliament. He had been cut off from most Conservative circles during the 1930s". A ministerial reshuffle in February 1942 left "not a single reliable Conservative in the Cabinet". In a conversation with Balfour, Bonar Law had once paid tribute to Lloyd George for having been "absolutely impartial between the Parties which, for the head of a Coalition Government, was a great advantage". Churchill, singlemindedly concerned with the war effort, carried impatience with the war effort, whether he extended it to factions within his own party is, of course, another matter.

"All previous coalitions left wreckage in their train", Mr Taylor concludes. "Churchill's National Government preserved the existing parties intact... and the two parties have roughly balanced to the present day." One may infer from Dr Butler's statistical evidence, however, that this balance owes less to Churchillian fair play than to the

Little TUCs

By Ross McKibbin

ALAN CLINTON:
The Trade Union Rank and File
Trades Councils in Britain 1900-1940
262pp. Manchester University Press. £11.50.

Alan Clinton has written about a subject scarcely considered by labour historians and he has done so—as his title implies—on the basis of the attitudes and feelings of the rank and file of the trade unions; to shift the focus of our interests from the official leadership to the working class to the people they represented. In his preface Dr Clinton makes it apparent whose side he is on: his book began "from an effort to understand why it was that during the General Strike... ordinary trade unionists showed a great deal more initiative—often a great deal more initiative—than their leaders", and he notes that in 1968 "millions of French workers brought alive the strength and inventiveness of their class".

But his commitment presents two problems. While it is clear what Dr Clinton means here, it can be argued that both these great strikes—the second more obvious than the first—merely demonstrated how weak the labour movement actually was. The latter, at least, can be said to have been a failure. French, that left the strike regime even more entrenched it was before? Or of a vote class the British—this allows miners to struggle on alone? They were overwhelmed? That is not blame here, but also the inventiveness or imagination? Truly, because this is so, Dr Clinton is not actually able to do as he would like to do, and he is left with the trade unionists of the TUC and the great national unions dominated it.

The second problem is the nature of the subject-matter. The trade unionists of the 1920s and 1930s are the history of the British labour movement and, were a very characteristic feature of its landscape. Furthermore, they are as close to the present as the past. The shop stewards—can he say. Yet they are not very close. Dr Clinton conceals that they do not represent "millions", but he argues, they do represent "the hundreds and thousands of the most active and useful statistical appendages—but he has not discussed any individual trades councils at length. The TUCs—that is to say, delegate organizations, about half of whom members bother to turn up at meetings. The delegates themselves are never elected by more than a minority of union members, and are described as "rank and file" only very loosely.

Furthermore, the coverage is necessarily thin. Dr Clinton has, in fact, collected much information, not available elsewhere, and his book is completed by some useful statistical appendages—but he has not discussed any individual trades councils at length. The TUCs—that is to say, delegate organizations, about half of whom members bother to turn up at meetings. The delegates themselves are never elected by more than a minority of union members, and are described as "rank and file" only very loosely.

After the Queen's death the buildings of the Royal Naval College were erected in the grounds of Osborne. Instead of being a place of rest it became one of intense activity. The royal connection continued however. Prince Edward (later Duke of Windsor) was soon joined at the college by other members of his family. He had been for a college and it was closed in 1921. The house is now used as a convalescent home and people are once again able to share in the "peaceful enjoyment" Queen Victoria Matson has described so charmingly.

inconvenient fact that no party received an outright majority in the electoral support.

In every contest from 1918 to 1970 the Conservative and Labour parties each secured between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of the national vote (both averaging 46 per cent) but in February 1974 and again in October 1974 both fell below 40 per cent. The two-party monopoly of votes, even more of seats, was being broken. At the very least had shown an unprecedented capacity to produce indecision.

Within the confines of a single essay, Lord Blake is able to comprehend with the span of centuries to which he effectively confines a prologue. The British were franks, and when they were not, they were not. The British were not a single-party government with a clear, if sometimes small, majority. His four collaborators, majority on shorter periods of time, and itself indicates the growing frequency with which the coalition has been mooted by political nationalists and, in one form or another, realized by politicians. The further chapters remain unimpaired. As with the recent headline Polanski trial in California, or that of the Mormon missionaries, the guilt in the case seemed to slide away from under the precise provisions of law and remain ultimately a subjective decision shaped by cultural climate and individual moral attitudes. Henry Fielding continued to believe that the law was the victim of the law of the land, and he was not alone. As with the headline Polanski trial in California, or that of the Mormon missionaries, the guilt in the case seemed to slide away from under the precise provisions of law and remain ultimately a subjective decision shaped by cultural climate and individual moral attitudes.

Henry Fielding emerges from Edward J. Bristow's sober and diligent account of moral cleansing campaigns as one of the few reformers who, on the evidence of his works, was able to remain in touch with the complexity of human behaviour and its emotional dimensions. Yet, as a humanitarian man of the law, he wished to correct the evils of the law, and he was not alone. As with the headline Polanski trial in California, or that of the Mormon missionaries, the guilt in the case seemed to slide away from under the precise provisions of law and remain ultimately a subjective decision shaped by cultural climate and individual moral attitudes.

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The chastity lobby

By Marina Warner

EDWARD J. BRISTOW:
Vice and Vigilance
The History of the National Vigilance Association in Britain since 1869
200pp. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. £12.

The case of Miss Elizabeth Canning in 1753 presents those enigmatic features of sex-linked crimes that fascinate wonderfully the public imagination. She was eighteen when she disappeared from her home, and a month later, said to have been eaten by a dog, she was found dead in a ditch. The case was a sensation. She was named the madam Mother Wells, who was tried with accomplices before Henry Fielding. One defendant was sentenced to death, Mother Wells herself found guilty. But the Lord Mayor, who attended the trial, did not believe Miss Canning's story. She was charged with perjury and transported. As with the recent headline Polanski trial in California, or that of the Mormon missionaries, the guilt in the case seemed to slide away from under the precise provisions of law and remain ultimately a subjective decision shaped by cultural climate and individual moral attitudes.

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Poisoning the air

By Peter Black

MARY LEWIS COAKLEY:
The Moral Case Against TV
200pp. New York: Arlington House. \$5.95.

As the Atlantic, immersed—without doubt—in the world of American television, stands as one of the most powerful forces in the world, Mrs Mary Lewis Coakley, like Mrs Whitehouse, Mrs Coakley is properly despairing over the decadent rubbish of *Hawaii Five-O* and *Charlie's Angels*. But she lumps *Kojak* with them, thereby placing her judgment in doubt. *Kojak* offended with an episode that showed a policeman making an affair with a prostitute. What if the police were treated sensibly, or does not interest her. It is enough that a policeman was portrayed as being vulnerable to an unbecoming passion, for it might lower public confidence in the force. An episode of *Policewoman* was similarly condemned for showing a sergeant "who had a drinking problem".

She ought to be able to see that *Kojak* is holding before its audience a mirror in which it can see the fearful mess it has made of American urban life; in so far as

cases, this quarrel about women's passive responsibility for sexual assault is still very much alive.

Dr Bristow's theme in *Vice and Vigilance* is a fascinating one, and he deals with it with admirable lack of sensationalism. Using a thorough exploration of records and the relevant crusading societies' proceedings, he traces the proliferation of worthy bodies who concerned themselves with the curbing of drinking, of swearing, of Sabbath-breaking and general heynho during the evangelical movements of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century—groups like the Society for the Reformation of Manners (1690) or the Society for Promoting Christian Reformation (1698). He then describes a second wave, swelling under the influence of the French Revolution. But the heart of the book charts the movements of the mid-nineteenth century onwards, producing the Society for the Suppression of Vice and, eventually, the powerful National Vigilance Association (NVA). Their direct heirs today, Dr Bristow points out in his conclusion, are the private bodies who concern themselves with moral pollution: Mary Whitehouse's National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, for instance.

The Vice Society—for so it was known, with that apt semantic shift identifying tilter with target (Lord Parnell; the Drug Squad)—began in 1802 by trying to stamp out blood sports and other popular business, but by the 1830s its chief concern was pornography. Pressure from the Society resulted in the Obscene Publications Act of 1857, under which *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was tried. The inherent trend in all morality crusades was shown in the case of the Victorian gentleman; in the margin, the whore. Josephine Butler diagnosed the double standard, not because she understood the nature of women's sensuality, but because she saw an imbalance in their claims to justice. She wrote: "As well might you attempt to do away with the slave trade by making it penal to be a slave."

In spite of her belief in the goodness of the human mind, and her dislike of coercive methods, Josephine Butler wished to use the law. Specifically she wished to reach seducers and pimps by raising the age of consent. She joined the National Vigilance Association, and she was not alone. As with the headline Polanski trial in California, or that of the Mormon missionaries, the guilt in the case seemed to slide away from under the precise provisions of law and remain ultimately a subjective decision shaped by cultural climate and individual moral attitudes.

criticism of this connection and of figures like Josephine Butler and Ellice Hopkins that Dr Bristow is at his most interesting. Such emancipators were fighting in an unlighted society that sexual pollution was as great a sin in men as it was in women. Their long campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts—laws that enforced the examination of prostitutes in certain ports and garrison towns—united the purists of women's liberation and the purists of men's liberation. In a form of sexual puritanism hardly acceptable to feminists today, but one which effectively confronted the public with the issue of sexual equality, Josephine Butler emerges from Dr Bristow's pages as a truly likeable, sensible, and passionate woman, with a certain ability to set an audience ablaze that not only converted many to her cause but gave John Addington Symonds, later writing to her, an erection—no perhaps what the pioneer might have wished.

Josephine Butler wanted the Acts repealed because state approval—implicit in government inspection—allowed prostitution to flourish. In her belief that the state's participation in any form of sexual abetting the problem, she perceived clearly the relationship between the prostitute as feudal serf, as the necessary untouchable demanded by the prevailing moral code. For the prostitute, like the Victorian gentleman, on the margin, the whore.

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to sixteen was the brainchild of W. T. Stead. For the purposes of an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he arranged for the abduction of one Eliza Armstrong, just to show how easily an innocent girl could be seduced. The ruin of a maiden could be achieved. His sequence of yellow press pieces inflamed public opinion more than any of the more responsible speeches and arguments of the feminists, and the Bill was made law.

Even though men like Havelock Ellis and James Hinton, a much-loved mentor of Ellice Hopkins, wrote about the existence—and the nature—of female sexuality, it seems to have been beyond the scope of the moral reformers to perceive any relationship between prostitution and female suppression within marriage. For the essential shape of the purify movements, as outlined by Dr Bristow, provides a looking glass image: what was intended resulted in its opposite. The more the moral reformers, the more formalistic the society, the more concerned with public decorum and propriety, with decorum and convention, the more chundering and punishing the god it worshipped, the more prostitution flourished. As Lawrence Stone has pointed out in *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, a book which extrapolates from its wide-ranging material far more excitingly than Dr Bristow, it is only

In a society like Italy in which sexual promiscuity was common among married women that there was serious competition, and that prostitution was, therefore, kept at a fairly low level, since men could obtain the same satisfaction without a woman. The spread of prostitution as a profession in England thus helped to preserve the virginity of many respectable young girls who would otherwise have been subjected to tremendous pressures from young unmarried males.

It is a pity that Josephine Butler or Ellice Hopkins did not take their understanding of every woman's fellowship with whores that bit further and investigate the potential of sexual expression for women rather than confinement for men. If they had, they might have avoided bequeathing us with the nasty moral association between the fighters for women's emancipation and cruel, unmanly, and mannish termites. For as Dr Bristow discreetly describes, one result of the Criminal Amendment Act was the

introduction of flogging for certain offences; one of the legacies of the Purify Alliance was the use of spiked bands to prevent nocturnal emissions and even, unspeakably, late circumcision and clitorotomy. In the nursery, there was a new commitment to discipline for infants to police the belief that their very natures were infected. After a long history in which women were unable to use their knowledge of the nursery to have any effect on public understanding and attitudes (did it really take Freud to notice infant sexuality? Hardly, since every mother or nurse had seen something of it. It is again just a question of who listens to whom, or who is master) it is a savage irony that these formidable campaigners for women's influence on public morality should have thrown female inherited wisdom out of the window.

Dr Bristow writes with sympathy about the repression of the poor in the early years of his survey, and he is scrupulous to be fair to the feminists. But his good taste at times makes the reader long for him to polish the very best of the characters crowding his canvas as Hannah More and Thomas Bowdler. It seems a shame he quotes so little or shows so little disrespect. Serious as might be the history of the establishment's efforts to arrive at sexual orthodoxy, the absurdity of trying to entrap the mystery of sex and society in legal clauses and sub-clauses is manifest from Dr Bristow's own inquiry, and one can therefore treat the subject with a little less respect. Under the greenwood tree/Who loves to lie with me? Under the greenwood tree/Who loves to work with me? Yet, as Eric Hobsbawm has written in *Revolutionaries*, "there is no intrinsic connection between sexual permissiveness and social organization." No society has yet been overthrown by agitation for erotic freedom. The revolution of 1789, although it stirred fears of libertinage in England and inspired fresh purify movements, was puritanical—something Sade, one of its victims, could not understand. The Victorian fear of subversion through sexual licence, or national weakness through depravity was without foundation. It seems that while love makes the world go round, it cannot turn it upside down.

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Fighting men's doggerel

By Samuel Hynes

M. VAN WYK SMITH:
Drummer Hodge
The Poetry of the Anglo-Boer War
1899-1902
372pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press, £9.50.

War is one of the over-interesting poetic subjects—even more interesting, perhaps, than love, certainly more various in its possibilities, and with a longer literary history. And though no current poet is likely to come up with a rousing battle-piece for the next New Review (and what battle could he possibly choose, if he were so inclined?) yet the number of persons who meet who have "The Charge of the Light Brigade" by Henry, and are prepared to recite it after a couple of drinks, suggests that the taste for martial deeds in rousing measures has not died, but has simply gone underground.

There have always been poems about war, but not always the same kind of poems, and not always from the same kind of poet. Before the twentieth century the poet-combatant seems to have been rare; I cannot think of a serious poet between Lovelace and Kipling who wrote about war from experience (and even Kipling was not doing the fighting), and the term "war-poet" itself is a twentieth-century coinage. And war poetry also seems pretty much a phenomenon of this century. Certainly one can think of some earlier examples—"The Battle of Blenheim", some Whitman—but the poem-against-war as a dominant mode is modern. Somewhere between Tennyson's middle years and the present, a fundamental change in the poetry of war, or in the poets of war, took place.

Most of us would probably place that change in the early years of the First World War, citing Owen and Graves and Sassoon as our examples; but it is one of the central theses of *Drummer Hodge* that in fact the change occurred earlier, during the Boer War. M. van Wyk Smith offers as evidence a vast number of poems written between 1899 and 1902, by soldiers on both sides, and by journalists, by back-home sympathizers, and by poets who would-be poets in the South African war. Certainly the quantity is striking, and supports the view that there was indeed a historical watershed there—more

poems were written about that relatively small-scale war, by more people, than had been written about any previous conflict.

Mr Smith's explanations of this evident fact are entirely convincing. He observes, first, that because of the Education Act of 1870, and the recruitment of volunteers, the army that England sent to South Africa was the first literate army in history. Its soldiers might have trouble in defeating their enemy, but they had no trouble in writing poems about their failures; so the first opportunity for soldier-poetry on a large scale coincided with a dismal and dispiriting experience of what soldiering was like. It is true that most of the poems written by combat troops were bitter, ironic, grousing poems.

Not all of the poems written in South Africa were by soldiers, however. The rise of popular journalism at the end of the century had created a new class of correspondents in the field, and the success of Kipling as a plain man's poet encouraged them all to try their hand. And there seems to have been an inexhaustible market for the stuff they wrote. Add to these categories the many articulate persons in England and the colonies who opposed the British cause, and wrote poems about their opposition, and the point is made beyond question—it was a very poetical war.

But that is not the point that Mr Smith intends to make. He explains one of his principal intentions in his preface: "A major thesis of this study is that the Boer War marked the clear emergence of the kind of war poetry which we have come to associate almost exclusively with the First World War. What, then, is that 'kind'?" It is poetry, would say, written by combat soldiers of some literary sophistication, who created a new style, free of the old rhetoric and the old platitudes, in which they could speak of their war without bling. But if this is what "war poetry" means, then the writers of the Boer War did not really anticipate it. Certainly the new education made it possible for common soldiers to write poems, and some of them wrote directly and realistically about the miseries and the mistakes and the dying; but most of what they wrote was in the traditions of their new literary-clumsy, sub-literary doggerel, modelled on popular ballads, journalists' verse, and musical songs, or on Kipling's adaptations of those models. Whereas Owen went to his war with his head full of Keats.

Virtually every poem that Mr Smith quotes is undistinguished,

ordinary, mediocre, or worse, as any large quantity of amateur occasional verse will be, whatever the occasion: it is simply an instance of the general truth that most verse is bad verse. In ordinary times we are protected from the consequences of this truth by the fact that most poetry is either never published, or appears in places where we do not have to look at it. But when thrust badness forward, and the Boer War years were a time when patriotic/polemical/heroical/cynical/tragic poems were everywhere (and no doubt were enthusiastically read). And now, in the interest of history, Mr Smith has thrust them forward again.

It is quite right, and a service to literary history, that he should have done so. Obviously he knows more about the poetry of the Boer War than anyone else alive, and a scholar with that sort of command of his subject must write down what he knows. Still, I cannot help remarking that he would have written a better book if he had been clearer about what he was doing, and why.

The questions that this sort of book asks and answers are essentially historical ones: what attitudes did various groups of poets—the fighting men of both sides, the old men at home, the French, the Germans, the Americans—take toward the Boer War, and toward war in general? How did they see the two sides? To what extent did they identify with the issues, and what issues did they recognize? These are interesting questions, and Mr Smith answers them interestingly. He sketches the history of war poetry in the nineteenth century, deals with Imperialist poetry at home and abroad, looks at Kipling, at pro-Boer protesters, at both English and Boer soldier-poets, and at the response to the war abroad. He is excellent on the way industrialized nations like America and Germany-mythologized the Boers, made them a race of primal giants and their society an image of industrialism's lost Eden. And he argues convincingly the influence of a new troops' recognition that they were fighting for a naked capitalism, for gold-and-diamonds.

But he errs, and congests his book, when he ventures outside his historical role. In the first sentence of his preface, that this is not an exclusively literary study of the poetry of that war; he might better have said that it should not be a literary study at all, for where the material moral, literary qualities can scarcely be at issue. But Mr Smith is a professor of English, and he apparently felt obliged to make literary judgments. So "Our Willage", a poem by W. H. R., is "one of the more touching" examples on page 129, and "The End of the Century" by Mary A. M. Marks is "more than usually competent" whereas poem on page 153 is "objectively bad in parts", and one on page 166 "relies 'shamelessly' on anapests. A measure of the general quality of the examples is Mr Smith's remark that, compared with most of the poems that he has quoted, "the work of William Watson takes on a compelling quality." One can sympathize with the difficulties: it isn't easy to find the right way to deal with popular journalistic verse. But certainly the wrong way is to try to discriminate between the absolutely awful and the merely bad.

Another out-of-place judgment is

the moral condemnation of the attitudes and values of the past. It may be that it is not possible to treat pro-war verse sympathetically now; perhaps it is even a virtue in us while we are on remembering (Chatterton). But sympathy is not necessary: only a certain historical objectivity. A good historian is not hasty in condemning the past for differing from the present—only Whig historians do that. And so does Mr Smith. He hates Henley for his "reckless and daring disregard for the sanctities of life", he dismisses Swinburne's war poems as "shrill and vicious", and finds poems by unknown versifiers sadistic and blasphemous—all because they wrote Imperialist, patriotic, polemical poems. This is a difficult point—some of these poems are indeed quite offensive to a modern reader. But angry judgments like Smith's obscure the historical issue: the question is not, were Imperialist poets wicked, but what did they write, and why? We patronize the past if we judge it and that is bad history, however good the scholarship that supports it.

There are, in *Drummer Hodge*, a number of intentions being pursued



'Cavalry revelry': menu of the "Send-off Supper" for the Cape Squadron of the Royal Horse Guards on November 27, 1899, before going off to fight the Boers; war had been declared in October, and the siege of Mafeking had already begun. From *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, pictorial history by Johannes Meintjes (192pp, Macdonald, June's, £5.95).

Threat

The seagulls are plunging past the window:
With vixen cries they rake the ground for victims,
Ready to pounce on the hen.

They have not spotted me yet here in bed,
And with my dark coverlet and sparse hair
I am inconspicuous.

They want to see my face come through the door
(Disc-like, attracting harm)
But want must be their master.

My garden is their arena.
They are lining the trees.
My intellect is well known to them.
And they lick to pick my brains.

Connie Bensley

LITERATURE

Sallies from the granite fortress

By John Colmer

CHARLES RICHARD SANDERS:
Carlyle's Friendships and other
Essays
Durham, North Carolina:
Duke University Press, \$14.75.

When George Eliot remarked that there is hardly a superior or active mind of this generation that has not been modified by Carlyle's writings, she was thinking of his published works; but the influence of his correspondence and personality on his friends was no less powerful. His letters, as C. R. Sanders has reminded us in a literary study of the Duke University edition, were "practical instruments" by which he sought to influence and control the behaviour of other people. There was no small difference between the public prophet and the private correspondent, yet the letters reveal facets of his character not fully reflected in his published works—his warm humanity and craving for friendship, for instance. They also show light on his gallery of Victorian portraits, revealing the slow processes of germination, the careful retouching, and final polishing.

The most controversial of his portraits, controversial because it expressed Carlyle's final thought not only of a cautious and reserved man, but of a man who was there ever, while we both lived, any cloud or grudge between us, or any interruption of our feelings for a day or hour. Blessed conquest, of a friend in this world! The idea of conquest and therefore of discipleship was rarely absent in Carlyle's relations with others. This partly explains the lack of rapport between the Sage of Chelsea and the Sage of Highgate.

But the battle was inward as well as outward; and for a psychological eye like our own, one of the most interesting things about Carlyle's friendships and literary portraits is the spectacle of the Self struggling to admit or release the Other, the type of struggle specific

ally recognized as "indispensable to a true knowledge." Sterling's article on Carlyle in *Essays and Tales* (1844). How else can we explain Carlyle's extraordinary friendship with the feckless Leigh Hunt? All that Professor Sanders can say at the end of his essay is "that they were so much alike that even the gods could not have predicted the success and quality of their friendship."

He does not notice that Carlyle used the identical phrase "much suffering man" to describe both Coleridge and Leigh Hunt. In the case of Coleridge, Carlyle struggled in vain to respond to all that was contrary to his own orderly, masculine, practical approach to life, while in the case of Hunt his heart went out to him and he promptly issued an invitation to Crugherbury. When Carlyle and Hunt were in Chelsea and found all "a mingled lazaretto and tinkers camp," he managed to stifle his moral disapproval, able to do so "because there was a certain joy and nobleness at the heart of it."

Disliking to be treated as a "passive bucket" by Coleridge, to be "wiped into, whether you consent or not," Carlyle found Hunt always ready to sit and talk and listen. At Highgate, he had to remain silent, as "Coleridge, a puffy, anxious, obstructed-looking, furtive old man," he said about him, "was a solemn about him, he nevertheless loved to relax and have his talk out. This is as true of the early as the later years. Looking back in the *Reminiscences* to a visit to Edward Irving at Kirkcaldy in 1816, he wrote: "From the first we honestly liked one another, and grew intimate. Nor was there ever, while we both lived, any cloud or grudge between us, or any interruption of our feelings for a day or hour. Blessed conquest, of a friend in this world!" The idea of conquest and therefore of discipleship was rarely absent in Carlyle's relations with others. This partly explains the lack of rapport between the Sage of Chelsea and the Sage of Highgate.

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The syntax of inscape

By Bernard Bergonzi

JAMES MILROY:
The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins
Kings
Kipp, André Deutsch, £7.95.

Hopkins told Robert Bridges that the poetical language of an age is to be the current language heightened. This remark, far from the point of departure for James Milroy's *The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Such a study has been needed and readers of this book will be indebted to Mr Milroy for it. Hopkins, as almost all poets are, is almost by definition, interested in language. Hopkins's interest was particularly conscious and systematic. His undergraduate notebooks show an early interest in the history of morphology of words, an interest which proved dominant as he grew up in an age which was keenly interested in linguistic developments, and in the emerging scientific study of language on a historical and comparative basis, and in modern lexicography. Hopkins was keenly interested in these developments; indeed, as Mr Milroy puts it, he was not just interested in the new philology, he was part of it, to the extent of contributing to Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*. Mr Milroy's study is a valuable addition to the context, and rightly in-cludes Hopkins's philology in his poetic achievement.

Try to see what Hopkins meant by "current language" and "heightened." Mr Milroy looks at the poet's use of language in terms of lexis, phonology and syntax. His aim is description, not literary criticism, but without doubt the description helps one to appreciate the poetry better simply by giving one a clearer sense of what is in the verse. For instance, Mr Milroy lucidly traces Hopkins's "metaphoric" and "phonological" features, like "how or brooch" or "key to keep . . .". The more interesting, however, is his attempt to recognize such characteristics. Again, Mr Milroy shows how Hopkins's poetic texture is a syntax as much as a lexis, in particular the sudden "within" angle poem be-

tween sentence-types, from declarative to interrogative to imperative and so on. This is a study of the syntax of the poem, not of the poem itself. This partly explains the lack of rapport between the Sage of Chelsea and the Sage of Highgate.

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Victorian Rembrandt" is somewhat misleading. Certainly, as Professor Sanders says in an essay with this title, there is Rembrandt's eye for detail, his respect for truth, delight in light and shade, and deep humanity. Where there was no threat of intellectual rivalry, as Carlyle could allow a little affection and harmless anarchy into his rigidly ordered world.

"Why write the Life of Sterling?" Carlyle asked on the final page of the finished work and answered, "I imagine I had a commission higher than the world's, the dictate of nature herself." In other words, it sprang from a deep personal need. Written in part to correct statements in Sterling's *Essays and Tales* and here appended "Memoir," as Carlyle's essay annotations of two copies make clear, it is a spontaneous tribute to the ardent, idealistic young man of almost feminine sensibility, a heroic battler for truth, whose devout submission to God was more praiseworthy than his discipleship to Coleridge, to the "vain Phantasmal Moonshine" which still "vexes this poor earth." Conventional praise of the famous passage beginning "Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill" as "one of the finest passages of prose in Victorian literature" somehow misses its deeper psychological interest and dramatic force.

Carlyle's whole chapter on Coleridge needs to be seen as the biographer's attempt to transcend the Self by seeing through the eyes of the Other. The question he is forced to ask himself is: "How could John Sterling have fallen under Coleridge's spell?" To answer that, the biographer and rival Master had to reach out to become the subject and disciple himself. But this he could not do except intermittently. The resulting portrait, based as it is on Carlyle's records and memories of his visits to Highgate in 1824-25 and his attempts to see Coleridge through Sterling's eyes, gains much of its compressed energy and dramatic power from this dual focus. Often the perspective changes in mid-sentence; sympathy for Sterling and antipathy for Coleridge alternate and clash; but finally the biographer prevails, too strong, and Carlyle remains imprisoned in his own prejudices.

Awareness of the violent switches of perspective, the agitated surface tensions, the unresolved conflicts (Whitman called Carlyle "The British Hamlet of Cheyne Row"), suggests that the phrase "The

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ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

Tradition and transmission

FOLKLORE

The Indian Mutiny broke out in 1857. But we children were never told—since no one until now has pointed it out—that the story that aroused the sepoys had already been current in Britain in a form

which it was abandoned. Above all (thank God for the doctors, and for the teachers too) cleanliness, the long tale of living with filthy air and water ("In 1876, still, the river Nievre is nothing but an immense sewer"), the history of soap and washing. There water, he tells us, has long been a privilege reserved for few. Most people in country and town cooked, drank and washed with the latter only seldom) water from rivers, wells, bogs and ponds that were muddy and slimy at best, more often infected.

In one Nievre township, in 1889, "with the first heat, the faecal matter gathered near the spring forms a black broth that gives off a foul stench and mixes with the water of several wells". At Tannay, in 1891, the seepage from the decomposing corpses in the cemetery runs open through the village into the river, the very same water that serves as washing place and washplace. At Saint-Benoît-des-Haies in 1894, the communal well is contaminated by infiltration from the latrines of the new school nearby.

Washing seldom went beyond face and hands. In 1897, Vacher de Lapouge could write that most French women did without ever having had a bath. Colette's Claudine was amazed to encounter a *hidet*, which she described as a "black horse" underclothes appeared like Jules Renard's Ragotte never wore underpants, and felt one only walked right when the thighs could touch), and were rarely changed (once a month in 1920). Shirts lasted a week, sometimes two, and were used to sleep in.

And what applied to the poor and middling groups applied to the upper classes, too: in the *Mémoires* of the Comtesse de Pange washing is utterly exceptional. When, in 1900, her parents restore an old manor in Anjou, they put in an English-style lavatory but never think to include a bathroom. A year later, when they buy a house in Paris, it has no bathroom either, no *cabinet de toilette*, and only one water tap on every floor. In 1905, at seventeen, she writes: "I had very long hair which, when I washed, I wrapped around me like a mantle, but these beautiful tresses were never washed. They were stiff and filthy. The very word shampoo was ignored. From time to time they rubbed my hair with quinine water. . . . No wonder people looked at me with every one smelted and, often, so did they."

The everyday context of the history we have written for so long is there for the culling. Books like these suggest many possible lines of investigation, few as far explored by men like Thuillier. It is not only the past that creates history; the historian creates it too.

Bastille Day, 1944

By Richard Cobb

At about 3 in the morning, just when I had finished running off the English news-sheet and was about to start the *bulletin* in French, a cow butted against the tent, stuck its head through the flap, upset the table and the heavy army typewriter, and then, withdrawing, its legs entangled in the ropes, brought the whole thing down on top of me. This was almost a nightly occurrence; but that morning it came at the worst possible time. I sorted out the wreckage; but was unable to get the tent up again. Working outside on a table, I had completed the sheet in French by 5. I had given decorated it like a piece of General Mobilisation, with crossed flags, to mark the occasion.

At 6, I went to the *école communale*, which also served as *mairie*, to await the little messenger sent out, just after dawn, twice a week by the post of Cottin, a little girl of eleven, dressed in a sort of sack and wearing *sabots*. She turned up at 6.30 pale, worried, and very polite. I gave her a copy, which the *mairie* would have pinned up on the notice-board outside the village café and watching the frail figure clapping uphill, her thin legs striding out with an air of purpose. I then set off on foot for Bayeux, bearing about 60 *bulletins*. There was seldom any military traffic on the dusty, yellowish road, but that morning it was unusually crowded with old-fashioned, two-wheeled farm-carts, rather smart *carroles* in polished pale wood, with dark green covers turning down forwards, so that one could scarcely see the drivers' faces, cut off at mouth level, giving them a rather sinister appearance like corduroy-covered Teutonic knights. . . . There were scores of them close-packed on all sides of the road, and all heading in the direction of the town, raising a beige-coloured fog up to the level of my middle, so that I seemed to be gliding along like a ghost above the low clouds, though, on each side of the narrow road, the orchards and pastures, the white fences and the black-and-white cows could be seen clearly in the bright morning sun. The road itself looked like an immense, twisting yellow serpent, as it headed towards the capital of the Bessin.

A cart, drawn by a very smart black horse in bright, polished harness, pulling out of the dimly seen stampede, on to the grass verge, and tipping over dangerously towards the road, stopped beside me. "Montez, Monsieur le

sergent", said a brick-red chin, from under the green cover; and I clambered up the metal step, pulling the cart over towards the verge. Once inside, and so high up, sitting on an upright wooden bench next to the driver, I recognized him as the *mairie* of a village near Barbeville with whom I had done a recent exchange of cigarettes for *calvados*: *Maitre* Lecordier, not that he was in the lay, but, as the largest farmer in the place, thus honoured by his fellows. I clutched my pile of *bulletins* as the cart jerked forward at a word from the red-faced driver. We crouched along at quite a pace, soon catching up with the main group—Ben Hur in slightly slow motion—and falling into a rhythmic clomp-clomp as we hit the paved of the "route de Bailleux", flanked by poplars, on the outskirts of Bayeux. It was already very hot, as it had been ever since our arrival.

We reached the town, past the familiar house of the Town Major, a large place in grey Fleury stone, covered with Virginia clematis, with long, handsome windows, green shutters, and an imposing double-door under a sculptured archway. It might have been the home of a *notaire* or a doctor, or, in this part of the world, a vet; next to a man of consequence. The Town Major had chosen well. At least to the small factory of "la biscuiterie Marie", which was closed for the day; the biscuits, made out of pure butter, were very good indeed, and as the market was restricted by the proximity of the Front, there was no shortage of them. We entered Bayeux in style, high up, like conquerors, amidst a tremendous clatter and jangling. It gave me the agreeable impression of having moved back into a peaceable nineteenth century, or at least into a pre-1914 France. Apart from my uniform, there was no hint of war; nor was any military vehicle to be seen, although a tremendous *motorcycliste* had been withdrawn some time before. Bayeux was already on its way to being a backwater, in the openly stated satisfaction of many of its inhabitants.

The farmer put me down in a large yellowish square, also thick in dust, and surrounded by red-roofed grey buildings with green or cream shutters. All round the square was an irregular but continuous line of *tricolores*. There were similar

curts, up-ended, all over the square, the horses tethered to plane trees. The drivers, large men with necks, in corduroys or black suits and caps, could be seen heading, in small groups, towards the cafés on, or just off the square. There were hardly any women to be seen; as it was a fête, the farmers had left their women at home. Whatever significance they may have attached to the event, they had decided that it should be celebrated *ent'hommes*.

But there were plenty of women and children (in neat blue or check smocks) in the *Grande Rue*. I walked along it through a forest of flags—*Mitrometers*, the stock-naked, had a huge Belgian one, embroidered at the edges, outside his shop—turning off, halfway down, into a shady courtyard, full of pots of geraniums and nasturtiums, and pushing open a rusty door which ground shrilly on its hinges, under a temporary wooden notice, black-edged, with bold, old-fashioned lettering in red: "La Renaissance du Bessin", which, as I knew, had been hastily put up, about a month previously, in order to cover over the more affluent-looking and sad brass letters of *Le Journal de Bayeux*.

Even in the deep shadow of the cool room, I could at once pick out the startlingly brick-coloured face and white hair of the editor; and, although it was both irrelevant and, perhaps, could not help thinking that, however, I had been looking at a long lost hope of anything positive. There were sounds of larks and cheering coming from the street. I thought I heard "Sant-Meuse", played too slow, rather faintly, but the editor, not even to notice, uttered a *révérence catodionne*.

I walked through the town, past the familiar house of the Town Major, a large place in grey Fleury stone, covered with Virginia clematis, with long, handsome windows, green shutters, and an imposing double-door under a sculptured archway. It might have been the home of a *notaire* or a doctor, or, in this part of the world, a vet; next to a man of consequence. The Town Major had chosen well. At least to the small factory of "la biscuiterie Marie", which was closed for the day; the biscuits, made out of pure butter, were very good indeed, and as the market was restricted by the proximity of the Front, there was no shortage of them. We entered Bayeux in style, high up, like conquerors, amidst a tremendous clatter and jangling. It gave me the agreeable impression of having moved back into a peaceable nineteenth century, or at least into a pre-1914 France. Apart from my uniform, there was no hint of war; nor was any military vehicle to be seen, although a tremendous *motorcycliste* had been withdrawn some time before. Bayeux was already on its way to being a backwater, in the openly stated satisfaction of many of its inhabitants.

The editor, a royalist in his mid-60s, was devoted to *calvados* as to the *duc d'Alençon*. His assistant, an albino with reddish eyes and red hair, M. Hébert—a name much in evidence in Lower Normandy—was slithering at a little side-table under a mass of cutlery, mostly advertise-

ments, in curiously old-fashioned type reminiscent of the *Stompe* Empire: "Hippolyte Lemarchand, Pompes Funébres du Bessin, en aguil, occupant half a page, the special number. He had been, twice a week, under the *Océan*, since the Liberation; since the local hospital had been closed with patients—mostly boys and girls with *hémorrhagies*, caused by not stepped on in long grass, and lay, dreadfully pale, and with *l'œil* and on the ground between *hémorrhagies*. M. Lemarchand represents continuity.

On the dusty shelves of a undity office were little piles of yellowing *Le Journal de Bayeux* tied up in pink *notaire*'s tape. The three of us, I think, looked at the editor, who was, with a look of distant, *hémorrhagies*, then opened a drawer and laid out an unmarked greenish-grey, which, predictably, turned out to be a local, and very potent, *hémorrhagies*. The three of us, I think, looked at the editor, who was, with a look of distant, *hémorrhagies*, then opened a drawer and laid out an unmarked greenish-grey, which, predictably, turned out to be a local, and very potent, *hémorrhagies*. The three of us, I think, looked at the editor, who was, with a look of distant, *hémorrhagies*, then opened a drawer and laid out an unmarked greenish-grey, which, predictably, turned out to be a local, and very potent, *hémorrhagies*.

This exercise provided Severin with a thrilling story of adventure and suspense; it also demonstrated the sea-worthiness of a "medieval" sailing boat, and that "medieval" materials (such as wood, ash-rod, and wool) were more dependable than modern materials such as plastic—and (which was vital) could be repaired during the voyage. Severin suggests in addition that items relating to his voyage seem to support claims made for the historicity of the *Nautilus*. Finally, while he takes the precaution of stating that the *Nautilus* was not a "medieval" ship, he has sailed in America, before the *Nautilus* was the discovery on North American soil of an authentic relic from an early Irish visit, he claims that his exploit had demonstrated they could have.

The technical account (with diagrams and tables of the boat and materials) is given in an Appendix. Briefly, the *Nautilus* was thirty-six feet overall with a beam of eight feet. She was made of a wooden frame covered with forty-ash-rod, which were fitted together, Har sails were of flannelette in areas 140 square feet on the mainmast and 100 square feet on the foremast. Her rig was twelve feet long. There was no engine of any kind. There were two tent-like shelters and a paraffin cooker box. But the boat had safety and otherwise useful equipment that the Irish monks did not have. It had a crystal-controlled transmitter, the power of which was supplied from two Lucas solar panels, and which had a range of

I began distributing my sheet to the civilian population. It was almost at the *Prosper* Corp member of the day in *deux* spent the rest of the evening *deux* to the south of the *deux* I had *deux* by *deux* I was let out in time for *deux* shift, which started at *deux* wind was still from the west, bringing a steady low *deux* the same clothing smell. *deux* the army was concerned, *deux* Day was an irrelevance *deux* inhabitants of Bayeux—a *deux* depended in time cut off from *deux* of France, the railway line *deux* deprived of news (the *deux* before collected *deux* lesses)—it meant *deux* promise at least of a *deux* normal conditions. *deux* of everyday life, *deux* the Bayeux, *deux* from *deux* brief headlines, *deux* already in *deux* beginning to *deux* foliage of the trees. *deux* midnight, *deux* carried *deux* the drunken shouts of *deux* as they returned *deux* in the villages beyond. *deux* glad that I had *deux* thing about *deux*

EXPLORATION

In the wake of the Saint

By John O'Meara

TIM SEVERIN:

The Brendan Voyage
An Epic Crossing of the Atlantic
by Brendan
300pp. Hutchinson. £6.95.

"Perhaps it's time someone tried to find out whether Saint Brendan's voyage was feasible or not. But it would mean using the boats and materials of that time to make it a fair test."

So the idea of the Brendan Voyage was born.

The speaker is Tim Severin. The voyage referred to in the first volume is that described in the *Legenda Sancti Brendani Abbatis* (first text, see that of Carl Selmer, Notre Dame, 1939; for translation, see *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, Dublin: Dolman Press, 1978). Whereas the *Nautilus* says nothing of American, Severin is going on the assumption that the voyage in question was to America—necessarily towards the end of the sixth century, and so long before Columbus. Severin found that the voyage which he undertook was feasible in that with a crew of five others he did sail in a boat, built to the specifications (so to speak) of the *Nautilus*, from County Kerry via the Hebrides and Faroes to Iceland between May and July 1977; and between Iceland and Newfoundland in May and June 1977.

This exercise provided Severin with a thrilling story of adventure and suspense; it also demonstrated the sea-worthiness of a "medieval" sailing boat, and that "medieval" materials (such as wood, ash-rod, and wool) were more dependable than modern materials such as plastic—and (which was vital) could be repaired during the voyage. Severin suggests in addition that items relating to his voyage seem to support claims made for the historicity of the *Nautilus*. Finally, while he takes the precaution of stating that the *Nautilus* was not a "medieval" ship, he has sailed in America, before the *Nautilus* was the discovery on North American soil of an authentic relic from an early Irish visit, he claims that his exploit had demonstrated they could have.

The technical account (with diagrams and tables of the boat and materials) is given in an Appendix. Briefly, the *Nautilus* was thirty-six feet overall with a beam of eight feet. She was made of a wooden frame covered with forty-ash-rod, which were fitted together, Har sails were of flannelette in areas 140 square feet on the mainmast and 100 square feet on the foremast. Her rig was twelve feet long. There was no engine of any kind. There were two tent-like shelters and a paraffin cooker box. But the boat had safety and otherwise useful equipment that the Irish monks did not have. It had a crystal-controlled transmitter, the power of which was supplied from two Lucas solar panels, and which had a range of

I began distributing my sheet to the civilian population. It was almost at the *Prosper* Corp member of the day in *deux* spent the rest of the evening *deux* to the south of the *deux* I had *deux* by *deux* I was let out in time for *deux* shift, which started at *deux* wind was still from the west, bringing a steady low *deux* the same clothing smell. *deux* the army was concerned, *deux* Day was an irrelevance *deux* inhabitants of Bayeux—a *deux* depended in time cut off from *deux* of France, the railway line *deux* deprived of news (the *deux* before collected *deux* lesses)—it meant *deux* promise at least of a *deux* normal conditions. *deux* of everyday life, *deux* the Bayeux, *deux* from *deux* brief headlines, *deux* already in *deux* beginning to *deux* foliage of the trees. *deux* midnight, *deux* carried *deux* the drunken shouts of *deux* as they returned *deux* in the villages beyond. *deux* glad that I had *deux* thing about *deux*

150 to 250 miles. A Senvoyne portable transceiver sometimes allowed ship-to-ship VHF links, and a third transceiver gave ship-to-air communication. With this gear contact was maintained almost daily with Valentia, Malin Head, Sturminster, Trillick, Vestmanna, Reykjavik, Prins Christian, Carlsburg, St Anthony, St John's (Newfoundland) in succession, the Icelandic Fishery Research Vessel, *Arni Fridriksson* and the air crews of many airlines. Safety on the boat itself was provided for by lifelines attached to Helly Hansen sailing suits, flares, a flotation beacon and an eight-man life raft. Food was (apart from the occasional glass of sustaining Irish whiskey) mostly in the form of tinned goods, and was replenished in ports call and at least once at sea. The crew however, caught and consumed sea birds and fish and observed that it was possible to collect rainwater much of the time.

Communication and safety precautions were of course in the frequent. Brendan must have been quite like that lived by Brendan and his monks. The Brendan was extraordinarily difficult to control and the crew had the sensation of riding a balloon. She was in imminent danger of capsizing in the frequent raging storms and mountainous seas and the sailors were constantly drenched, even in their sleeping bags. To fall overboard at certain sectors of the passage was—according to Royal Navy survival experts—to be dead in ten minutes. The *Nautilus* was a small, sleek, sleeked by a factoryship which seemed unconscious of its existence; it was snuffed at both dangerously and less dangerously by various species of whales; it was holed and repaired in ice-cubes, out of which it was towed for hours by a French fishing-boat—but finally the Brendan looking "like a floating bird's nest . . . an untidy middle of ropes and flax, leather and wood" brought Severin and his crew safely to America. The author's conclusion: "There was no longer any practical objection to the idea that Irish monks might have sailed their leather boats to North America."

Of course not! Once a boat sailed, and her materials could stand up to a long voyage, and the weather conditions were favourable, a boat such as the Brendan could have sailed from Ireland as far as Newfoundland long before Saint Brendan was born. Even the author of *Nautilus*, *History of Ancient Geography*, 1948, requires it as plausible that Pythons of Mar-silles reached Iceland by 320 BC, and does not dismiss the evidence that the Phoenicians reached as far west as the southern reach as the *Nautilus* in ancient times. But the *Nautilus*, pace Tim Severin, contains no shred of dependable evidence that such a boat did sail from Ireland to America.

Severin took great pains in preparing and carrying out his courageous exploit. He has recorded it in splendid prose, fine photographs, interesting drawings by the crew member Trondur Patursson, and in film; but he is strangely coy on literary documentation. He makes no reference to any secondary literature, such as Geoffrey Ashe's *Land to the West* (London, 1962) or S. E. Morison's *The European Dis-*

covery of America (1971). He does mention Carl Selmer's edition of the *Nautilus*, and the translations found in the Penguin *Lives of the Saints* and that done by him which he uses freely (without acknowledgment). This last, of course, is the one which has come from the west. Notions are, of course, national. Although one must treat details given in such a literary narrative as the *Nautilus* with extreme caution, Chapter 1 of the *Nautilus* does not state that the Promised Land lay "far away in the west" but rather that Mernoc and Barrind sailed "westwards" from the island where Mernoc lived, which in its turn was near Slieve League in Donegal. Again all other directions in the *Nautilus*, for what they are worth, indicate that the Promised Land is near Mernoc's island. Barrind, for example, tells Mernoc's monks that they were "living at the gate of Paradise. Near here (Mernoc's island) is an island which is called the Promised Land of the Saints where night does not fall nor day end". Naturally if one sailed to Ireland from such a land, one would still be coming from the west. One must recall that Brendan set out for the Promised Land because he heard of it from Barrind, and Barrind was brought there by Mernoc, a frequent visitor. The island was in the ordinary way inaccessible, being surrounded by fog, and unaffected by time.

It is possible indeed, as I have said, that Saint Brendan arrived in America—but the existence of the North American continent too far as we can judge was not even known to him, and in any case it is not clear that he was not the people of the Canaries in 1750. Needless to say the presence of Bretonic islands close to America suggested that Brendan must have got to America too. The *Nautilus*, however, does not justify us in saying that he did.

A more serious matter is the author's cavalier treatment of the reading of the text on the question of the direction of Saint Brendan's sailing as he finally approached the Promised Land. The reading is unambiguous: he sailed east. But Severin deliberately refuses to accept this. A view based on this reading, he says, is "misplaced. The

Into the extended blank

By Christopher Lloyd

PETER BRENT:

Black Nile

Mungo Park and the search for the Niger
200pp. Gurdan and Crampton. £7.90.

When Sir Joseph Banks formed the African Association (out of which grew the Royal Geographical Society) West Africa was described as "a wide extended blank. . . . The course of the Niger, the place of its rise and termination, and even its existence, were still undetermined. A 2,600-mile river which flows north and east and south, and which possessed twenty-six different names, was guaranteed to defeat the efforts of cartographers. Some imagined that it flowed west as a tributary of the Nile, hence one of its names "the Nile of the Negroes"; others thought that it

flowed east as an extension of the Senegal River, still others, including Mungo Park, regarded it as somehow part of the equally unknown Congo. In order to solve the mystery Park was dispatched by the Association as a geographical missionary" in 1795.

He was not the first of such emissaries (all his predecessors had died in the attempt), but was by any means the last of this heroic band of young men. The problem had to be attacked from the west, the north and the south before the course of the river was finally determined fifty years later. But when Park first saw "the long, straight, majestic Nile, glittering in the morning sun, broad as the Thames at Westminster, flowing slowly to the eastward" he had solved the principal question.

Black Nile fleshes out the bare narrative of Park's two expeditions with a useful account of the political anarchy into which the young explorer had plunged, and by a young man who plotted the course of the Niger.

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Chants for fulling to

By Douglas Sealy

J. L. CAMPBELL (Editor and Translator)
Hebridean Folk Songs 2
Waulking Songs from Barra, South Uist, Eriskay and Benbecula
367pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £15.

For the expression of feeling at its most naked and powerful there is nothing in English or Scots or Welsh to equal these waulking songs—anonymous Gaelic songs, apparently composed in the eighteenth century, and which were in use on the mainland as early as 1581.

A band of eight or ten would go around a table, clumping and pounding the cloth which had been soaked in urine . . . to the accompaniment of a series of songs, clearly composed by women, often by expropriation, as a whole they give a vivid picture of life in the Highlands and Islands in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the women's point of view. They are unsophisticated and completely spontaneous. At the same time it is clear that the two who composed or extemporized the words of these songs lived at their command a large store of formulaic passages which could be used freely in the real origin of these myths is quite unknown.

The waulking process, with its heavy double . . .

the most propitious place for such poetry as I have described, but primitive and illiterate peoples all over the world have produced similar results in similar conditions and, as J. L. Campbell suggests, "It is likely that the heat, excitement and rhythm of the waulking would induce a state of semi-trance among improvisers of songs. . . . Praise of chiefs and their magnificence and hospitality, the successful hunt, love and desertion, and lament for the dead were the great forces that moved the Hebridean women of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the words were kept in the communal memory, because hand-waulking continued in the Outer Hebrides until the late nineteenth century."

J. L. Campbell has been collecting the songs since 1937 on Edinboro, on disc recorder, on wire recorder, and on tape recorder, and he comments on the remarkable fidelity to words and tunes shown by the collectors. The Gaelic-speaking settlers in Cape Breton, in Nova Scotia, though they have been separated from their origins for over a hundred years, and waulking sessions have become "milling parties" where neighbours meet for a sing-song, still retain excellent versions of the same songs, even making the often inconsequential breaks in a song's continuity in exactly the same places. Mr Campbell does not raise the interesting question of when or why the composition of new waulking songs ceased; the composition of new songs of other types is still very much alive in the

Hebrides. Perhaps the waulking songs were too intimately linked to the remnants of the Heroic Age that lingered on in the remote fastnesses of the west until Culloden and the destruction of the clan system. That the waulking songs remained lyrical and never degenerated into epic is probably due to the highly melodic tunes (exploited for drawing-room and concert performances by Marjory Kennedy Frazer) and the fact that the chant-like reciting tone of the epic singer was in use for the performance of the long Ossianic poems.

High praise is deserved by Francis Collinson for his meticulous notation of the tunes and his copious musical notes. Some of the tunes are not to be found in any of the collections of Gaelic songs, and they are of great value. This first note of this is a fine and a very good catch and identify it could be a flat, B natural or C. Metrical, rhythmic, melodic and ornamental variants in the repetitions of the tunes are carefully transcribed and noted. The collection, even more interesting musically than Margaret Fay Shaw's *Folk Songs and Folklore of South Uist* or Frances Tolmie's *105 Songs of Occupation from the Western Isles of Scotland*, though these two of course remain indispensable.

The actual sound of a waulking or of the style of singing cannot be given in the printed page, more than Mr Campbell's unpretentious and almost literal translations can give a true impression of the beauty and nobility of the originals. Happily, the School of Gaelic Studies has issued two records containing waulking songs,

and Gaelic can be learnt. Mr Campbell, in order to give a rhythmic feeling to his translations, has been unable to avoid the occasional inversion and archaism, which are utterly foreign in feeling to the Gaelic, but he has avoided the coarse, ignorant excesses of Fr Allan MacDonald, whose translations of songs in Volume 1 are, in many times transformed them into a Hebridean Hlawaitha. Here is Mr Campbell:

It was not a lark that woke me
But the door of the big house
behind broken,
The door of the big house and of
the kitchen,
My father invited me to the back
room,
Not to count me out my dowry,
But to expel me from the district.
I kept brown-haired linn from him,
A little linn, my love, my darling,
No wonder that I sing your
lullaby,
You are my son, you are my
brother's
Grandchild twice unto my mother;
Pity 'tis I was not in Ireland
Under heavy stones a-lying—
Tender I go to the Kirk session,
Few there'll be there to defend me.

Mr Campbell's devotion, industry and scholarship are equalled only by his high regard for the tradition-bearers who made his work possible and to whose memory he has dedicated this collection. "Auntie and Calum Johnston, the two who sang the songs of Barra and Uist, have passed away." Mr Campbell, an air, a linn do chuir.

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In the Troll Wood

OLIVE JONES illus. John Bauer
Fifteen

The grand manner

By Warwick Bray

BRIAN FAGAN:
Elusive Treasure
The Story of Early Archaeologists
in the Americas
383pp. Macdonald and Jane's. £7.95.

Brian Fagan's theme is the story of archaeological research in North America and the Maya region, from the arrival of the conquistadors until the early years of the twentieth century. This is a good point at which to stop. As archaeology has become more professional, it has developed a technology and a jargon in keeping with its new status, and the general public has become wiser. Many of the heroes of the present book (Stephens in Mexico, Squier in the United States) took pains to entertain as well as to instruct. They wrote for the educated layman, not just for a small coterie of academic colleagues, and they were free from the modern belief that to be taken seriously, it is necessary to be both impersonal and dull.

In these nineteenth-century writings, the personality of the author

can always be glimpsed behind the archaeological facts, and, in extreme cases, the personality overshadows the facts entirely. This justifies Professor Fagan's decision to build his history around individuals rather than philosophical controversies or famous discoveries. The gallery of characters ranges from the sixteenth-century Bishop Landi (who burned hundreds of "heathen" manuscripts, yet wrote the best available ethnography of the Yucatec Maya), to cranks such as Augustus Le Plongeon (Aztec buff, and author of *Queen Moo and the Egyptian Sphinx*), and other charlatans (like William Pidgeon, who invented a Winnebago Indian sage called De-coo-dah and made a fortune out of publicizing his "secret knowledge").

This is all splendid entertainment, but it is also an essential element in the history of archaeology as perceived by the general public. As best-seller lists show, and as many a bar-room conversation confirms, the works of the plausibly confident trickster have often been more influential than those of the best academics. For a historical illustration, see Professor Fagan's comments on the archaeological background of Joseph Smith and on the close relationship between the Reverend Solomon Spaulding's bogus *Manuscript Found*

and certain parts of the Book of Mormon.

To the British reader, the least familiar, and perhaps the most interesting, chapters may be those dealing with the investigation of the burial mounds of North America, with the growth (and eventual demolition) of the notion that a distinct race of Mound Builders constructed these huge monuments before the arrival of the American Indian. For those who missed the recent *Sacred Circles* exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, the sophistication of prehistoric North American culture may come as a surprise, and the resistance of nineteenth-century farmers to believe that these structures were put up by the ancestors of the existing Indians is easy to appreciate.

It may also come as a surprise to realize that many issues that are causing so much heart-searching among anthropologists today are far from new. The debate over the status of the American Indian, and of aboriginal culture in a white or mestizo world, goes back to the early years of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Many of the friars had the spiritual and physical welfare of the Indians at heart, hoping to retain what was best in native culture and to graft on to it the religious and moral values of Christianity. These attitudes may have been paternalistic, but for men like Sahagun and Las Casas the Indians were not only dead souls, but also rights.

Two other present-day issues (the question of conservation versus development, and the problem of uncontrolled treasure hunting) were already the subject of controversy in the mid-nineteenth century. With the opening up of the frontier lands, thousands of mounds were levelled by farmers or sacked by amateur antiquarians and relic hunters. The arguments for and against regulation of these activities have a completely modern ring.

In the final section, Professor Fagan uses the lessons from history as the basis for a statement of his personal views about the condition of archaeology in America today. With reference to the "treasure-hunters" of the nineteenth century, he remarks that they built as though they would live for ever but did their shopping on the assumption that they might die tomorrow. From middle Hellenistic times we find marble funerary altars becoming prevalent—the square ones which are strictly Rhodian in origin and occasionally embellished with a small relief, and the round ones which are familiar open-air monuments. The latter are of Rhodes and attain greater distinction in Cos and Halicarnassus. Commonest among the round altars are those with ox-head and swag decoration, of which half a dozen are shown in the book. The most published for the first time. There is also a few stelae with reliefs of conventional types. Lions and perhaps dolphins were occasionally carved in the round to serve as guardians on top of the tomb (and we may add dogs if the epitaph of note 211 is spoken by the lion, who bids the sharp-toothed ones stay on the polished plinth and watch the place while he mounts guard on the apex of the pyramid).

After his survey of the material evidence Fraser turns to sepulchral practices and their social implications: the forms of epitaphs, cases and formulae, cinerary caskets and the evidence for joint and family burials, and communal burial-plots of religious and professional associations. He also touches on the evidence for the practice of cremation, such as family vaults providing for the interment of the owner's posterity, sculptured sarcophagi, and the invoking of the Roman law against the violation of sepulchres. Rhodes had an unusually large alien and non-Greek population, but in contrast to its neighbour Cos, surprisingly few resident Roman citizens. The foreigners—and emancipated slaves—lacked roots in the community and had no place in public life that perhaps is why they seem to have felt a greater need to advertise their literacy and acquire status by being members and benefactors of the lodges. It is they who make this book for by contrast the Rhodian dead are pertinently taciturn. One is again reminded of Stratoniceus, who visited Teichussa up the coast from Halicarnassus, and on passing through the cemetery called out to his slave, "Let's be going, for it seems that the foreigners die here and not the citizens."

Crown courts

By Roger Moorey

DAVID STRONACH:
Pasargadae
A Report on the Excavations Conducted by the British Institute of Persian Studies from 1961-1963
338pp and 192 plates. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £25.

In 546 BC Cyrus, creator of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, founded Pasargadae in a high valley of western Iran; according to Strabo, on the site of his final triumph over the last Median king. Soon after the death of Cyrus it was superseded by the grander Persepolis, which has overshadowed it ever since. As the cradle of the court style in architecture and sculpture, which was to distinguish the last of the great imperial powers of the ancient Near East, Pasargadae offers much of interest both to art-historians and to archaeologists. Inadequate publication of earlier excavations and inaccurate information have for too long crippled its proper study.

David Stronach's authoritative book, whose elegant layout bears witness to the generosity of the Keyworth Foundation, will change this. He provides the accurate, precise study of Pasargadae, where his conducted excavations of the newly founded British Institute of Persian Studies in 1961-63, we have long awaited as a companion to Schmidt on Persepolis. Each surviving monument is examined in turn.

Specialist and non-specialist alike will read with ease and instruction the author's skilful blend of archaeological evidence and admirably balanced assessments of previous opinions. A substantial part of the book is devoted to the objects from the British excavations; all are succinctly described and fully illustrated. Various specialists have assisted with interpretation of the inscriptions. The standard of illustration is consistently high, especially in the plans and architectural drawings of Bosley and Weaver. Most unfortunately a rare confusion of numbers and captions disfigures the crucial main site plan.

To call Pasargadae a city is misleading. Its primary function remains hard to define, as the death of Cyrus profoundly affected its development. It appears to have intended a dynastic shrine, but it was too become a memorial to him and little more than the coronation place of his successors, all of whom were buried elsewhere. So far as is known it was never encircled by walls, had no network of streets, no extensive residential quarters, no administrative buildings of substance and no bazaars.

Pasargadae, as we have seen, consists of about six widely spaced and much damaged structures, each with its own courtyard, after the death of Cyrus the site was held by the "treasure" of the coronation ceremony. If it did not, their location would be discovered. A detached (the Zandans) was probably a relic rather than a tomb of a temple. An opulent "secret" with stone altars and a ruined mound revealed little, which to reconstruct the site served there. The royal palace, ceremonial than residential, a group of multi-columned with long porticoes and a well-tended garden at the centre of the site. Away to the south-west, an enclosure of its own, was the tomb of Cyrus, long since looted and empty.

Mr. Stronach concentrated research on these structures, and his investigations were completed before, primarily by the British Institute of Persian Studies, and All Sami. He has brought understanding of their function and date. Exploration of the now empty spaces between, and as expensive as it would be, still to be undertaken. We know for certain whether the soil still contains more coherent master-plan by Cyrus, and perhaps left by him at his death. When he was here, if only briefly, he lived in tents, as has been from one ancient translation of the Persians? Or was the body of buildings here have so far recognized the head, the palace and the temple?

Carl Nylander and Mr. Stronach have analysed the evidence at Pasargadae and have impressed Cyrus had been encountered with the splendours of Lydia, the defeated her legendary city. In 547 BC, the Persian king Cyrus the Great, was direct heir, apparent in the sculptural palace complex; the still hybrid "genius" of Gae even owe something to the geography of Elamite lands everywhere at Pasargadae and the evidence for the influence, or indeed continuity, in the forms of masonry, column bases, in the technique of stoneworking and construction, decorative motifs and in the relation of buildings. The Cyrus himself is argued to have been a Persian, a son of the Persian king, a son of the Persian king, a son of the Persian king. Even where an ancestry for a building is cited, Ionic or Anatolian elements were to be excavated, the resemblance of the Sardinian Croesus, grew even greater?

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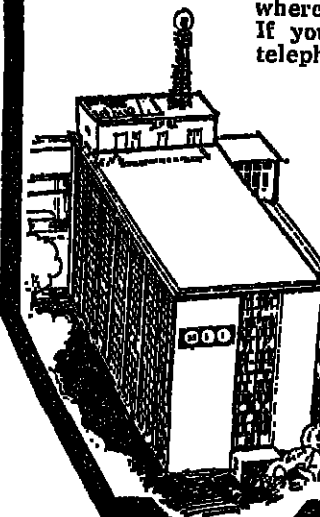
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He or she will be expected to take sole charge of the library, and to combine the efficient running of the library with a flexible and innovative attitude to its future development.

Salary will be in the range £3,600 upwards according to experience, with four weeks' annual holiday, employer's pension scheme and lunch vouchers.

Applications including a curriculum vitae should be addressed to Christopher Stobart, Commodities Research Unit Ltd., 26 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

CUNNINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARIES & RECREATION
BRANCH LIBRARIAN

SALICUTS—Post Ref. No. 85/105

Salary—AP III £3,474-£3,825 plus £12 supplement & Phase II award

Applications are invited from Chartered Librarians for the above post. The successful applicant will be responsible for the day to day operation of the library, including book selection, stock control, maintenance of audio material and promotion of the service locally.

Application forms are obtainable from the Director of Finance and Administration Officer, Cunningham House, Irvine, Ayrshire, telephone 01825 4411, and should be returned by not later than Friday, 21st July, 1978.

Post reference number should appear on applications.

Director, The Humanities Research Centre

The University of Texas at Austin

Applications and nominations are invited for the position of Director of the Humanities Research Centre. Candidates should be experienced in administration of special collections of rare books and manuscripts and related materials. In addition, candidates must be producers of scholarly and must qualify for a tenure appointment in one of the academic departments of the University. All applications must include a complete curriculum vitae and the names of at least three persons who might serve as referees.

Communications should be addressed to Dr. Eldon Stuntz, Vice-President for Research, The University of Texas at Austin, Main Building 303, Austin, Texas 78712. The deadline for receipt of applications is September 1, 1978. Do not include materials that must be returned.

The University of Texas at Austin is an equal opportunity employer with an approved affirmative action program.

CHELMER Institute of Higher Education

Deputy Site-Librarian

AP3/4 required immediately for the Chelmsford site library. The post carries special responsibility for construction and planning areas. Experience in academic libraries an advantage, but not essential.

Salary scale: AP3/4 £2,922-£3,702 + £312 + 5% + 1978 increment p.a.

Application forms and further details available from the Institute Secretary, Chelmer Institute of Higher Education, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford CM1 1LT, to whom application forms should be returned by 28th July, 1978. (Telephone Chelmsford 54461, Ext. 221).

DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL County Library Service Second in Charge

Ferndown Group (EAST AREA)

Applicants must be Chartered Librarians, preferably with public library experience, staff direction and supervisory applications, with names of three referees, should be sent by August 26, 1978.

Further information from the Librarian, Cambridge University Library, West Road, Cambridge CB2 3RQ, or telephone 0223 334444, with names of three referees, should be sent by August 26, 1978.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Applications are invited for the Chair of English Literature which will fall vacant on the retirement of Professor C. C. Cawley on 30 September, 1978. The salary will be not less than the minimum of the professional range (£5,900). The University reserves the right to consider for appointment persons other than those who submit formal applications.

Applications (two copies) stating age, qualifications and experience, and naming three referees should be sent to the Registrar, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT (from whom further particulars may be obtained), quoting reference number 5/12/AG, not later than 30 September, 1978. Applicants from overseas may apply in the first instance by cable, naming three referees who should preferably be in the United Kingdom.

WEST LONDON INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Incorporating Borough Road College, Mari Grey College, Chiswick Polytechnic

TECHNICAL SERVICES LIBRARIAN

(Lancaster House, Isleworth)

Salary AP2/3. (NJC Condition of Service.) £3,282-£4,072 inclusive. Pay award pending.

A challenging full-time post, involving responsibility for cataloguing and classification, staff direction and supervision, and preparation for transfer to computer operation.

Further particulars and an application form from: The Assistant Registrar, West London Institute of Higher Education, Gordon House, 300 St. Margaret's Road, Twickenham, Mdx. TW1 1PT. Tel: 01-891 0121 Ext. 280.

TECHNICAL HELP TO EXPORTERS SERVICE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

An Assistant Librarian is required in the Service's new section. The position involves professional library duties as well as a contribution to the operation of the consultancy information service. Assistance with development of new systems and staff supervision.

Applicants must be qualified librarians with technical library experience, able to work with a minimum of supervision. Starting salary, inclusive of salary supplement, will be £3,400 per annum.

The post is permanent and negotiable, with an allowance of five weeks' holiday.

Please apply, quoting reference number 10/10, to: The Personnel Department, BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTION, 389 Chiswick Avenue, Uxbridge, Middlesex, U.K. Tel. 0453 33111.

PLYMOUTH POLYTECHNIC Learning Resources Centre CHIEF CATALOGUER

Salary: £4,343-88-24,815.66

This new post has been established on a line when changes to automated systems are being planned, and offers challenging and demanding. Applicants must be professionally qualified graduates with good cataloguing experience, preferably with automated systems in a large academic library.

Application forms, to be returned by Friday, 4th August, 1978, can be obtained with further particulars from the Personnel Officer, Plymouth Polytechnic, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA.

Secretary

Wanted for Librarian of learned society/professional body overlooking Regent's Park, near Regent's Park underground stations. Usual secretarial duties, but varied and involving some publications work. Able to use own initiative. Knowledge of medical terminology not required. Hours 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., 4 weeks' holiday. Starting salary of around £3,345—and there is a free lunch too. Award-winning modern building.

Apply in writing to Office Manager, Royal College of Physicians, 11 St. Andrew's Place, London NW1 4LE.

S. MARTIN'S COLLEGE LANCASTER ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

£2,569-£3,774

Chartered status; interest in children's books and non-book materials. Well-stocked new library in a Voluntary College of Higher Education. Accommodation on site may be possible.

Further details and application form from Bureau, 6 Martin's College, Lancaster LA1 3JD.

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